THE NEW
INDIAN EXPRESS
BENGALURU • TUESDAY • JUNE 15, 2021 • ₹7.00 • PAGES 20 • LATE CITY EDITION

READ SHARE FOLLOW
newindianexpress.com
facebook.com/thenewindianexpress twitter.com/newindianexpress
instagram.com/newindianexpress

ANOTHER VAX CANDIDATE IN THE U.S. SHOWS HUGE PROMISE

US-based Novavax said its vaccine had an efficacy of 90% against infection and 100% against moderate/severe disease

NOVAVAX's HIGH STRIKE RATE AGAINST ALPHA

The firm, releasing its phase 3 clinical trial report, said the efficacy rates of its recombinant nanoparticle protein-based vaccine were based on trials on nearly 30,000 volunteers between January and April in the US and Mexico. The high efficacy rates were achieved predominantly against the infectious Alpha variant of the virus that was first detected in the UK

SERUM INSTITUTE's BRIDGING TRIAL

- After regulatory nod, Novavax plans to ramp up manufacturing capacity to 15 crore doses per month by December-end
- The results are significant for us, too, as the Serum Institute of India is a manufacturing partner. It is currently undertaking a bridging trial on 1,600 people before launching the Indian version

21-DAY
GAP BETWEEN THE TWO DOSES OF THE VACCINE DURING THE PHASE 3 TRIALS

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Food, fuel prices push wholesale, retail inflation

May consumer price index-based inflation at 6-month high, wholesale prices break record

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

RISING fuel and food prices pushed retail inflation to a six-month high of 6.3% in May, breaching Reserve Bank of India's targets, government data released on Monday showed.

This is way above the projected levels, implying that the impact of the localised Covid-19 restrictions was more severe than expected. "The month-on-month uptick in the CPI in May 2021, which saw widening state-level restrictions, is nearly as high as the hardening seen in April 2020 during the nationwide lockdown, testing the assumption that supply disruptions have been limited in the second wave," said Aditi Nayar, chief economist, ICRA Ltd.

According to data by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, food inflation shot up to 5.01% in May from 1.96% in April. While vegetable prices softened, fruit price zoomed 12% and the cost of pulses and products rose 9.4%. Even the prices of non-alcoholic beverages rose 15%.

In non-food items, the rise was steep in fuel and light, registering an inflation of 11.6%, and transport and communication at 12.4%. With wholesale price index (WPI)-based inflation also touching a whopping 12.94% – the highest since 2013 – experts warn that inflation will worsen in the coming months. WPI-based inflation in May was pushed by fuel and power basket, which shot up to 37.6% in the month against 20.94% in April due to hardening global commodity prices.

"If wholesale prices are rising, eventually it will start finding its reflection in retail inflation as well," said Sunil Kumar Sinha, principal economist with India Ratings and Research. He warned that this trend will make things worse for the RBI.

FEELING THE PINCH

Item	Inflation rate
Oil & fats	30.84%
Egg	15.16%
Transport & communication	12.38%
Fruits	11.98%
Fuel & light	11.58%
Pulses & products	9.39%
Meat & fish	9.03%
Personal care & effects	7.99%
Spices	6.86%
Household goods & services	3.89%
Milk & products	0.64%

Figures are year-on-year provisional inflation rates for May 2021

NATIONWIDE	JUNE 13	JUNE 14
Fresh cases	80,834	70,421
Recoveries	1,32,062	1,19,501
Deaths	3,303	3,921

JAB-O-METER TAKE YOUR SHOT
June 13: 34,84,239 doses
June 14: 22,15,947 doses
TOTAL DOSES: 23,17,13,321

K'taka plans ₹1L compensation for BPL families that lost breadwinners

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister BS Yediyurappa on Monday announced a compensation package of ₹1 lakh to BPL card-holding families who have lost an adult earning member to Covid-19. This is an extension of the ₹1,850 crore economic relief package announced in two parts by the State Government earlier.

"The Covid pandemic has killed earning members, pushing families into extreme financial distress. The scheme has been announced keeping this in mind. It will be limited to one person per family," Yediyurappa said. The scheme is estimated to benefit around 25,000 to 30,000 such families incurring an expenditure of ₹250 crore to ₹300 crore to the state exchequer.

"Given our financial situation, we have been able to announce the scheme and this tells us that our situation is better than most States during the pandemic. Nowhere in the country has such a scheme been announced," Yediyurappa said, after Finance Department officials informed him that revenue targets are better this year as compared to the corresponding period last year during the first wave of Covid.

CONTINUED ON: P7

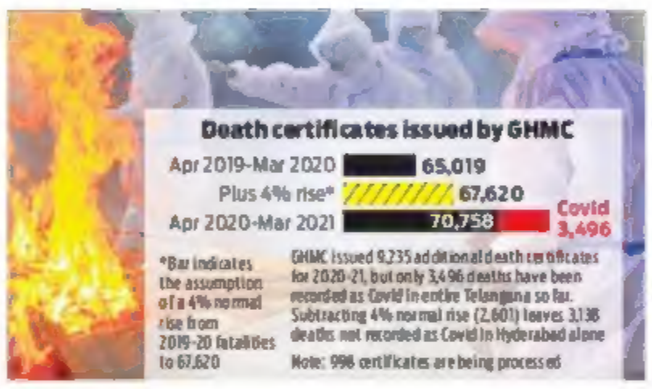
INDIA'S FATALITY MATH MESS

There is a complete mismatch between death certificates issued across various districts and the official Covid count

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

WHILE the Centre recently bristled at an international news magazine pegging India's excess deaths due to the pandemic at 5-7 times the official count, the fact that there is under-reporting cannot be brushed away.

Under mounting pressure for an honest admission on the scale of the pandemic, Maharashtra and Bihar raised their fatality figures last week through data reconciliation after audit/validation by around 14,000 and 4,000, respectively. But allegations that not all deaths in private hospitals or of patients on their way to hospitals in rural areas were recorded under the Covid category refuse to go away, prompting the Patna High Court to direct the Bihar government to confirm whether its data revision was full and final.


Death certificates issued by GHMC
Apr 2019-Mar 2020 65,019
Plus 4% rise* 67,620
Apr 2020-Mar 2021 70,758
Covid 3,496
*Bar indicates the assumption of a 4% normal rise from 2019-20 fatalities to 67,620
GHMC issued 9,235 additional death certificates for 2020-21, but only 3,496 deaths have been recorded as Covid in entire Telangana so far. Subtracting 4% normal rise (2,601) leaves 3,138 deaths not recorded as Covid in Hyderabad alone
Note: 998 certificates are being processed

Hyderabad: Data discrepancy, to put it mildly, is visible across the country and under all political dispensations. Take Hyderabad.

There was a 14.2% jump in deaths within the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) limits in 2020-21, as compared to the same period in the previous year.

A Right to Information query by this newspaper on the death certificates it issued revealed that the corporation handed out 9,235 more certificates between 2020 March and 2021 April (see box).

Besides, 998 other death certificates are under process. Also, data was available only for 18 erstwhile circles of GHMC, which have now been reorganised into 30 circles within the same area.

Yet, the cumulative count of Covid deaths recorded in the entire Telangana as on June 14 is just 3,496, though there were humungous crowds at the state's burial and cremation grounds when the second wave was at its peak.

A municipal officer in Hyderabad said an year-on-year increase of 3-4% in death certificates is normal because of continued migration and rising awareness of the need for death certificates.

However, a 14.2% increase in a year when for three months the city was under lockdown was concerning, he said. "During lockdown there were hardly any road traffic deaths, which is one of the major contributors to daily toll," he added.

Mysuru: Sa Ra Mahesh, a legislator from Mysuru, disputes the district administration's Covid-19 death figures.

CONTINUED ON: P10

EXPRESS READ

Five MPs oust Chirag Paswan as LJP leader

New Delhi: Five of the six Lok Janshakti Party MPs in the Lok Sabha have joined hands against their leader Chirag Paswan and elected Pashupati Kumar Paras, the youngest brother of Paswan's late father and party founder Ram Vilas Paswan, in his place, causing a big churn in Bihar politics. P9

Used tech to beat Anand in chessgame: Bizman

Bengaluru: Nikhil Kamath, an entrepreneur, has grabbed headlines for the wrong reasons. He used fraudulent means to defeat Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand in a charity chess stream on Sunday. Kamath conceded on Monday that he took help from the engines. P15

KARNATAKA	JUNE 13	JUNE 14
Fresh cases	7,810	6,835
Recoveries	18,648	15,409
Deaths	125	120

Prohibitory orders to continue in B'luru

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE State Government has eased lockdown norms, but the prohibitory orders in Bengaluru will continue till the midnight of June 21, said City Police Commissioner Kamal Pant on Monday.

The order prohibits assembly of four or more people in public places. However, it gives exemptions to purpose specified in the government order on the lockdown. Bus stands, railway stations and airports too are exempted from the order, Pant said. The number of Covid cases in Bengaluru is on the decline, but there is a need to be alert and follow all precautions to contain the virus spread, the order stated.

Traffic jams return

Even as the Unlock Phase 1, after restrictions of a month and a half, came into effect, Bengaluru witnessed traffic jams, rush at markets and large gatherings of people near tea and coffee stalls, giving the impression that there are no Covid restriction in the city.

With some relaxations made to lockdown norms, vehicles seen caught in a traffic jam on NR Road, near Town Hall, in Bengaluru on Monday | VINOD KUMAR T

A huge rush was reported at toll plazas, city checkposts and entry points like Tumakuru Road, Mysuru Road, Attibele and Old Madras Road. Salons, beauty parlours, mini-malls, footwear and garment retail stores, not listed to be opened under Phase 1 of Unlock, too were open.

Meanwhile, in many of the 19 districts, where curbs have been eased, rain forced people indoors. In some districts, officials ensured that the curbs continued to be enforced strictly.

Udupi, Kalaburagi and Karwar witnessed empty streets as torrential rains hammered the districts. But in Tumakuru and other towns, it was chaos as people moved around. P6

Outrage over death of journo who feared for his life

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Lucknow

A day after writing to the UP additional DGP for security cover, a 42-year-old TV channel journalist died under mysterious circumstances in Pratapgarh district on Sunday late night. While preliminary probe indicated Sulabh Srivastava died in what appeared to be an accident, his family alleged foul play, claiming Sulabh was killed by the liquor mafia for running a news story against them.

Sulabh was found injured near Katra Crossing and was taken to a hospital, where he was declared 'dead on arrival'. On Saturday, Sulabh had written to ADGP-Prayagraj Zone, expressing fears that his family and he could be targeted over his news report on illicit liquor dens. His report was telecast days after 22 people died in Aligarh district after consuming spurious liquor. Hours after claiming Sulabh had died in an accident, Pratapgarh East ASP Surendra Dwivedi said the police were looking into other angles as well.

FAMILY TO DONATE SANCHARI VIJAY'S ORGANS

MG CHETAN & A SHARADHAA @ Bengaluru

FAMILY members of national award winning Kannada actor 'Sanchari' Vijay, who was declared brain dead on Monday after he met with a tragic road accident on Saturday night, have decided to donate his organs.

His relatives and friends said that it is a fitting tribute to the talented artist, who distributed food packets and helped the needy during the Covid lockdown.

In the health bulletin released by the hospital at 8.20 pm on Monday, the doctors confirmed that Vijay was brain dead.

Sanchari Vijay

"Vijay's apnea tests were performed at 12.25 pm and 7.50 pm today (Monday) and are found to be positive. This means that there is irreversible complete damage to the brain. The next step is the retrieval of organs and then transplant procedures will follow at various hospitals, including Apollo," neurosurgeon Dr. Arun L Naik stated in the bulletin.

Vijay's younger brother Siddesh Kumar, trying hard to control his emotion, said, "He was known to give back to society. That is why we decided to donate his organs".

The mortal remains of Vijay will be kept at Ravindra Kalakshetra campus between 8 am and 10 am on Tuesday for the public to pay their last respects.

"The final rites will be conducted with full state honors at his birthplace, Panchanahalli in Kadur taluk on Tuesday," said director Mansore.

Sanchari Vijay aka Vijay Kumar B hailed from Chikkamagaluru district.

He was an engineering graduate and worked as a lecturer in a college before moving to Bengaluru. After playing minor roles on stage, he came to be popularly known as 'Sanchari' after his association with Sanchari Theatre, run by actor Rangayana Raghu and his wife Mangala.

CONTINUED ON: P2

> Very hurt to hear the news about Vijay. Knew him as a great human being and a good actor as well
>
> Shiva Rajkumar, Actor